

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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**MEETING CALENDAR**

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT went to press, go to [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) or call (617) 973-7119. A photo ID is required to access most meeting sites.

**AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON****August 13 (Wednesday)**

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Conference Room 4. 3:00 PM

**August 14 (Thursday)**

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 10:00 AM

**August 21 (Thursday)**

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM

**August 25 (Monday)**

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3. 5:00 PM

**August 27 (Wednesday)**

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM

**August 28 (Thursday)**

Boston Region MPO Transportation

Calendar continued on p. 2

## Bond Bill Passes with \$3 Billion for Bridge Repair Statewide

### NEW ACCELERATED BRIDGE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS MOST CRITICAL BRIDGE NEEDS

Following on a multibillion-dollar transportation bond bill that was passed by the Massachusetts legislature in the spring, state lawmakers approved an additional investment of nearly \$3 billion in infrastructure improvements for the repair of as many as 300 of the most structurally deficient bridges in the commonwealth. At an outdoor ceremony on the banks of the

Charles River, with the aging Longfellow Bridge as a backdrop, Governor Deval

Patrick signed a bond bill for a statewide accelerated bridge program into law on August 4.

The Longfellow Bridge, which carries Red Line rapid transit trains between downtown Boston and Cambridge, and the Fore River Bridge, in Quincy, are among the major bridge projects in the Boston Region Metropolitan

Planning Organization (MPO) area that are anticipated to be funded by the



new accelerated bridge program.

• Bridges cont. on p. 3

## EPA Rules on State Implementation Plan Transit Commitments

### PROJECTS TO MITIGATE BIG DIG AIR QUALITY IMPACTS APPROVED

The commonwealth has received federal approval to revise the plan for implementing a set of transit system improvement projects required to offset the air quality impacts generated from the construction of the Boston Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project.

The U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) issued a ruling on July 31 favoring the recommendation of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to substitute a set of transit projects for several projects originally included in the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP outlines the steps the state must take to fulfill federal air quality mitigation requirements and sets timelines for project completion.

The substitute projects are:

- Fairmount Line Improvements
- Construction of 1,000 New Commuter Parking Spaces
- Final design of the Red Line-Blue Line Connector
- The Green Line Extension to Somerville and Medford
- SIP cont. on p. 2

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, Cities of Boston, Newton, Salem, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

# MASSHIGHWAY'S ROAD SAFETY TIPS

Over 400 people die each year in traffic accidents in Massachusetts. Yet there are simple steps that motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians can take to protect themselves and others as they travel on the commonwealth's roadways.



The Massachusetts Highway Department posts "Top Ten Road Safety Tips" on its website at [www.mhd.state.ma.us/safetytips/](http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/safetytips/). The site focuses on a variety of safety issues, and new topics are added twice a month.

A recent tip offered advice about sharing the road with trucks and buses, and avoiding accidents in areas of train traffic. Other tips have focused on topics such as drunk driving, tire safety, disability awareness, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) safety awareness. All of the past "Top Ten Road Safety Tips" are available on the website.

## Advisory Council to Elect New Chair

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council will be electing new leadership in September. The Council's nominating committee will present its recommended candidates for chairman and vice chairman at the August 13 Advisory Council meeting, which will be held in Conference Room 4 of the State Transportation Building (see calendar for details). The election will take place at the September Council meeting, and the new term will begin in October. For more information, contact John Hersey at (617) 973-7144 or [jhersey@bostonmpo.org](mailto:jhersey@bostonmpo.org).

*Calendar cont. from p. 1*

Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 10:00 AM*

**September 4 (Thursday)**

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

**September 18 (Thursday)**

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

### AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

**August 5 (Tuesday)**

MBTA Public Meeting: Design for the Blue Hill Avenue Station on the Fairmount Corridor. *Mildred Avenue Community Center, 5 Mildred Avenue, Mattapan. 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM*

**August 7 (Thursday)**

MBTA Public Meeting: Design for the Newmarket Commuter Rail Station on the Fairmount Corridor. *Project Hope Community Room, 550 Dudley Street, Boston. 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM*

## EPA Okays New SIP Projects for Air Quality Improvements

• *SIP cont. from p. 1*

Those projects replace the following projects:

- The Green Line Arborway Restoration
- The Red Line-Blue Line Connector between Bowdoin Station on the Blue Line and Charles Station on the Red Line
- The Green Line Extension to Ball Square/Tufts University

The EPA ruled that the substitute projects would result in emission benefits equal to or greater than the benefits that would have been real-

ized from the original projects.

Improvements to the Fairmount commuter rail line will include station and bridge upgrades and the construction of new stations in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury. The parking project will add 1,000 parking spaces at MBTA stations outside of the urban core. The Red Line-Blue Line Connector project is the design of a link between the Blue Line's Government Center Station and the Red Line's Charles Street Station. The Green Line Extension

project will extend the Green Line from Lechmere Station to Medford, with a spur to the Union Square area of Somerville.

The Boston Region MPO will be amending its long-

range Regional Transportation Plan to reflect the changes to the SIP commitments.



*A portion of the proposed right-of-way for the MBTA Green Line extension to Somerville and Medford*

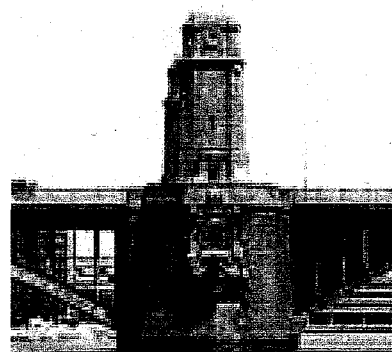
# Hundreds of Massachusetts Bridges to Be Fixed

• Bridges *cont. from p. 1*

There are a total of 543 bridges in the state operated by MassHighway and the Department of Conservation and Recreation that are classified as structurally deficient based on their deteriorated condition and reduced load-carrying capacity.

The accelerated bridge program is aimed at reducing the number of bridges deemed structurally deficient by 15 percent over eight years and forestalling the need for larger investments in the future, which would likely result due to the rising costs of construction and deferred maintenance costs.

Approximately one-third of the \$3 billion investment will be paid from grant anticipation notes, which the state uses to borrow against future federal funding, and two-thirds will be paid from bonds.



Longfellow Bridge

## Boston Region MPO Activities

### BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Transportation Planning and Programming Committee reviewed grant proposals from human services organizations and local transit providers that are seeking funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute program and New Freedom program. The Committee voted to forward nine proposals to the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, which manages the competitive selection process for the Boston Urbanized Area. The Committee also approved two work programs: the State Fiscal Year 2009 National Transit Database Directly Operated Bus and Rail Passenger-Miles and Boarding Estimates, and the State Fiscal Year 2009 National Transit Database Purchased Bus Transportation Passenger-Miles and Boardings Estimates. The Central Transportation Planning Staff conducts these work programs annually for the MBTA, which uses the data obtained to report transit ridership to the Federal Transit Administration.

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The July Advisory Council meeting featured a number of updates.

Jared Fijalkowski, of the MPO staff, spoke about recent Mobility Management System recommendations for studies and programs relating to bicycle and pedestrian mobility, transit, roadways, freeways, high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes, and park-and-ride lots.

Hayes Morrison, of the MPO staff, provided an update on the proposed draft FFYs 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She explained that the TIP will be circulated for public

review with the JOURNEY TO 2030 Amendment, which is scheduled for release later this year, to allow for inclusion of a current air quality determination that is consistent across documents.

Beverly Woods, of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, spoke about projects in the region to the north, including bridge improvements, commuter rail and rail trail expansions, and large-scale developments. George Kahale, of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, provided updates on projects to the west, including the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Improvements project, rail and bus service expansion plans, and Route 2 improvements.

The Council then voted to submit a comment letter to

the MPO conveying the Council's support for improved coordination between Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) studies and the implementation of recommendations, increased funding streams, HOV-lane and freight studies, and the existing UPWP process.

### ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At the July meeting, Robert Rizzo, the MBTA's Manager for Paratransit Contract Operations, provided an overview of the planning and acquisition operations of THE RIDE program. The MBTA is in the final stage of a five-year contract for the procurement of 439 paratransit vehicles (vans and sedans), 397 of which have already been purchased. The

final stage of the contract includes the purchase of 42 lift-equipped vans, which will replace vehicles that have achieved a useful life of seven years in service. The next contract, spanning state fiscal years 2010 to 2014, will result in 795 RIDE vehicles in service by 2014.

Mr. Rizzo described a recent visit by the MBTA's site review team to the manufacturing facility of Coach and Equipment, the New York-based company that custom-builds THE RIDE's vans. The vans are purchased through Shepard Brothers Inc. of New York. They are built on Ford's E350 chassis and contain lifts manufactured by California-based RICON Corporation.

# Revamped MPO Website Goes Live

## NEW FEATURES INCLUDE A TOOL FOR INTERSECTION DATA-MAPPING

The Boston Region MPO has launched a revitalized website with a new look, improved interactive features, and readily accessible information, including meeting dates and agendas. The regularly updated homepage provides a snapshot of MPO-related events and activities in the region, as well as access to the MPO's bank of transportation data resources.

Since the website is designed as a resource for the general public, users can easily access information online about MPO meetings, public-comment forums, and transportation studies. For those looking for more information on the MPO, links are provided to the MPO's programs, planning activities, transportation-planning policies, and Web-enabled outreach and public

involvement avenues. Current and archived reports, data resources, links to supporting partners and research sites, and an extensive glossary of transportation terms provide users with a host of transportation information just one mouse click away.



*The intersection of Cabot, Pond, Winter, and Knowlton streets in Beverly, one of the intersections that are monitored in the region. Click on the "Mobility Monitoring" tab of the MPO's new homepage to access intersection performance information, crash data, and recommendations for improvements.*

While many functions of the original website have been enhanced, other features are completely new. For example, the interactive webpage for intersection data lets

users manipulate a data-imbedded Google map and review an intersection's characteristics, raw data, and related recommendations for improvement.

Go to [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) to learn more about MPO programs and activities, trans-

portation projects in the region, and valuable data resources. Before you leave the site, don't forget to take the online survey!

## TRANSPORT

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